

The Department of Commerce was created by the Nevada Legislature in 1963 to bring together under one supervisory department the previously existing divisions of Banking, Insurance, Real Estate, and Savings and Loan. Two years later the Fire Marshal Division was established and under this division, the State Fire Marshal's Advisory Board. In 1973 the Consumer Affairs Division was established within the Department.

In 1975 the Department of Commerce added the Housing Division, the Credit Union Division, and the Thrift Company Division. The Credit Union Division worked with the Credit Union Advisory Council to adopt and enforce regulations pertaining to the operation of credit unions in Nevada. The Thrift Company Division was created to administer the Nevada Thrift Companies Act and was supervised by the Commissioner of Credit Unions.

The next year (1976) the Mobile Home Agency was separated from the Fire Marshal Division and placed under the administrative authority of the Department Director. In 1979 the Legislature upgraded the Mobile Home Agency to the Mobile Home Division and later the name was changed to the Manufacturing Housing Division. Also in 1979 the Legislature placed the Unclaimed Property Section under the Director's office of the Department of Commerce. This allowed the Director to collect dormant accounts from financial institutions that held money for people whom they could not locate. By 1980 the Developmental Disabilities Advocate's Office was put under the direct administration of the Director's office.

In an important development in the history of the Department of Commerce, the Nevada Legislature created the Financial Institutions Division in 1981 which combined the Savings and Loan, Banking, Credit Union and Thrift Divisions. In 1982 an official organizational structure was established by the Department of Commerce for the Financial Institutions Division. Also in 1981 the Fire Marshal's Advisory Board was renamed the State Board of Fire Services and a new board was created within the Fire Marshal Division, the Board of Fire Safety.

In 1983 the Legislature created the Industrial Development Revenue Bond Program as an economic development tool. In July of that year the Department of Commerce established an Ethics Committee, the first in the executive branch of state government. And in the same year the Unclaimed Property Section was changed to the Unclaimed Property Division; the Legislature formally made it a division in 1985.

Economic development programs gained importance in the Department of Commerce as entities were established within the Director's office to support a program of economic diversification: the Export Finance Program (1985), the Venture Capital/Developmental Financing Program, and the Program for Financing Water Projects (1987).

That same year the Legislature authorized the Director of the Department of Commerce to form a non-profit corporation entitled the Nevada World Trade Council whose goals were to help businesses promote and engage in the export of goods and services from Nevada and to accomplish the international trade objectives of the state plan for industrial development and diversification.

In 1986 the Developmental Disabilities Advocate's Office changed its name to reflect the federal legislation that funded it. The federal act was known as the Protection and Advocacy for Mentally Ill Individuals Act of 1986. The new name of the Nevada office was the Office of Protection and Advocacy. In 1990 the Director's office began administering another economic development board; this one was called the Nevada Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneur Council.

In 1993 there was a massive reorganization of Nevada state government and the Department of Commerce was abolished and replaced by the Department of Business and Industry.

Department of Commerce

RECORDS 1965-1991 5 cubic feet

Director's Office Correspondence	1972-1991	3 cu. ft.
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This collection consists primarily of the papers of two directors of the Department of Commerce, Michael Melner and Larry Struve. Especially enlightening are the papers of Larry Struve which date from 1983 to 1991.

Legal and Legislative Files	1965-1991	11.5 cu. ft.
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The bulk of the legislative files date from 1982 to 1987 with much detail regarding the path of legislative bills related to the Department of Commerce.

Fire Marshall Division Boards	1978-1986	.5 cu. ft.
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This series is made up of records of meetings of the following boards under the Fire Marshal Division: Fire Marshall's Advisory Board, 1978-1979; Board of Fire Services, 1982-1986; and Board of Fire Safety, 1981-1986.